DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 261 472 EA 018 015

AUTHOR Thomas, M. Donald
TITLE Emerging Skills for School Administrators: Needs for the Future.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Principles; Administrator Role; Elementary Secondary Education; *Leadership; *Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Responsibility; *Leadership Styles; Moral Values; *Supervisory Methods
IDENTIFIERS Charisma; Theory X; Theory Y; Theory Z

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses leadership theories, leadership research issues that educational leaders must confront in the next decade, and leadership skills required for the future. The discussion of leadership theories begins with a review of McGregor's Theories X, Y, and Z and moves on to the qualities embodied in such heroic, charismatic, and crusading leaders as Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and others. A third approach to leadership emphasizes professional or businesslike qualities such as articulation of goals, ability to organize, understanding of finance, and ability to communicate. Educational leadership requires an eclectic approach, combining charisma, moral clarity, and business-minded professionalism. Research in educational leadership demonstrates that effective leadership varies according to personality and circumstance, but that school leaders tend to be moral leaders as well. The emerging leadership issues of the future are grouped into four categories: economic, public confidence, governance, and social stability. Each is accompanied by a set of leading questions. The administrative skills needed to address these issues include the ability to articulate the historic mission of schools, to accommodate the demands of a pluralistic society, to promote equal opportunity, and to change leadership style as needed. (TE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED261472

EMERGING SKILLS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

M. Donald Thomas[1]

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Donald Thomas

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 018 015

EMERGING SKILLS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

M. Donald Thomas[1]

More than anything else, the future will require articulate and appropriate educational leadership. This paper discusses 1) leadership theories, 2) leadership research, 3) issues which educational leaders must confront in the next decade, and 4) leadership skills required for the future. Its main thesis is that history demonstrates that we have always had men and women in education who have provided effective educational leadership. Similarly, in the future we will have men and women in leadership positions who will successfully deal with the issues and problems of the future, especially if we anticipate the skills needed by educational leaders.

Leadership theories. All of us are familiar with the various leadership theories developed by men and women throughout the course of history. First it may be useful to review several of the theories and examine their usefulness in the education arena. Because of space limitations, it is not possible to review all theories encountered in the literature.

MacGregor has proposed that leaders can be classified into two types. One he explains with his theory X and the other with his theory Y. Theory X relates to a leadership style which is aggressive, task oriented, and tough-minded. It places priority on production and getting the job done. Theory Y is humanistic, democratic, and promotes self-motivation. It places priority on people and creating high satisfaction on the job. MacGregor believes that theory Y leadership is more effective and more appropriate than theory X leadership. A further extention of this is theory Z of leadership and the use of quality circles.

Some believe that leadership is a product of social spontaneity. When the problems develop, an appropriate individual will arise out of the social order and lead the people onward. This is referred to as the "Man on the White Horse" theory. Examples of such leaders are Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Both assumed enormous responsibility in a crises situation and led their countries to victory over substantial odds. Recently we had Lee Iacocca, a relatively unknown, become a national hero. He saved Chrysler from bankruptcy and turned it into a profitable company.

Many believe that leadership is a matter of charisma. Those who support this theory rely on personality, good looks, and charm as the main components of

EA 018 015

---

[1]Thomas is Deputy Superintendent, Division of Public Accountability, South Carolina Department of Education, Columbia, South Carolina 29201.

leadership. It is believed that John F. Kennedy was such a leader. Those who possess charisma, it is said, can easily gain support for their ideas and their programs.

There are those who believe in the professionalization of leadership. They believe that leadership is dependent on being able to set goals and to achieve them. This is the business view of leadership--establish specific goals and organize to achieve them. It is also referred to as MBO leadership. Qualities needed by the leaders are: skill to articulate the goals, ability to organize, strong understanding of finance, and ability to communicate. Under this theory, one can learn to be a leader through hard work, diligent study, and intense planning.

Some say that leadership can best be exerted by mysticism. The effective leader is one who can expound mystic ideas and strange motions. Such a leader is detached from his followers and maintains psychic distance. His purpose is to determine what is to be done and to order others to do it. The mystic obtains direction from "universal power" and articulates it to his followers. Often such leaders form cults and strange dogma to be followed without question.

Some believe that leaders must be moral individuals and that leadership is not possible unless it is built on ethical principles. Examples of such leaders are Christ, Gandhi, King, and Pope John. Moral leadership, it is stated, is the only valid leadership required by a society. Without moral acts, the society degenerates and finally destroys itself. Therefore, men and women can find satisfaction and success only when led by moral men and women.

An examination of the education arena leads us to conclude that the educational leader of tomorrow must be a student of leadership theory. He or she cannot, however, rely on <u>one</u> theory. Educational leadership requires that one be eclectic--possess some of each of the characteristics of leadership. Many times the leader will utilize theory Y. Sometimes the leader will operate from theory X. Often the educational leader will need to crusade for important ideas and ride a white horse to the State legislature. When needed, the leader will utilize charisma--his or that of an associate. If appropriate MBO will be used; when needed, prayer is helpful; and most of all, the leader will articulate moral positions and promote justice, equity, and fairness. The most important question to ask is this: "Is it the right thing to do" or "Is this in the public interest?"

<u>Leadership research</u>. Research in educational leadership demonstrates that there is no single type of person who cannot, under certain circumstances, provide leadership. History shows that all kinds of men and women have, on certain occasions, become leaders. Tall persons, short persons, brilliant persons, stupid persons, black, white, red, yellow, young, old--all have demonstrated leadership. A study of the

superintendency does show, however, that school leaders have three characteristics above the normative. They tend to be 1) taller, 2) have higher energy levels, and 3) are more intelligent than normal. This does not mean, however, that persons who are short, or who have low energy levels, or who are not so bright have not and will not continue to become school leaders. Leadership in any field is not restricted to people with specific personality characteristics or specific skills and talents.

Furthermore, we find that a person may be a great leader under some circumstances and a failure under other circumstances. Churchill is a good example. So are many superintendents who succeed in one district but not in another. A certain chemistry exists which makes leadership possible with one board of education and not another. Persons can be successful leaders under certain circumstances with certain people and then fail badly under changed circumstances. Ben Willis served Chicago extremely well until the political climate no longer supported his style of leadership. The same was experienced by George Hansen in Washington, D.C. and Harold Spears in San Francisco. Lawrence Shepoiser was a great superintendent in Wichita, Kansas, until the teachers union turned against him. One never knows what event or events will turn leadership into failure. The fact of the matter is that individuals can lead at one time and not lead at other times. Leadership is more than the individual. It is the person positioned into a set of conditions. If the chemistry is appropriate, leadership results.

Some leadership results from a concentration of power. Some lead by persuasion. There is always power which resides in leadership offices. Power alone, however, does not effectively establish leadership for long periods of time. Power must be accompanied by persuasion. Those who follow a leader must eventually believe and support what the leader wishes to accomplish. Effective leadership in the end is based on "the consent of the governed." This does not mean that the leader does only what followers wish the leader to do. It does mean that the leader persuades followers to want and to support what the leader wishes to do. Power accompanied by effective persuasion establishes leadership for longer periods of time. Further, power tends to create distrust in leadership; persuasion tends to build trust.

As examination of educational history also shows that there is no single training program for school leaders. They have arisen from all types of educational backgrounds: English, history, mathematics, physical education, industrial arts, science, business education, sociology, etcetera. No single university has a market on school leaders, no single graduate program is most effective, and no single school of education is the best. School leaders have come from rural schools, from urban schools, from small and large colleges, from other professions (law, business, science),

and from a diversity of preparation programs. No one has yet established the most effective educational program for training school leaders. The final model training program is yet to be established.

Men and women do have an easier time in obtaining positions of leadership if they graduate from prestigious schools and have the sponsorship of well-known professors. Employment in education is easier when one has the endorsement of "headhunters" who are respected members of colleges of education at highly regarded universities.

An examination of educational research indicates that school leaders tend to be moral leaders as well. They are respected both for their educational knowledge and for their ethical beliefs. Leadership based on moral positions and ethical principles, has, in the long course of history, influenced more people than any other type of leadership. Horace Mann was such a leader. Education to him was a moral issue. Martin Luther King was such a leader. Desegregation was a moral issue. Our nation is better because of what they said and did.

Educational issues of the future. The emerging issues can be grouped into four categories 1) economic, 2) public confidence, 3) governance, and 4) social stability. Each of these issues is important and complex. They are issues which will require our attention and our skills to solve.

A period of intense reform seems an appropriate time to examine the future of American education. It is a defined boundary from which we can look into the future. It is an opportunity for us to think and imagine what future issues mean for us and for education. Such an examination may help us to establish appropriate educational priorities. Following is a listing of the issues which educational leaders must wrestle with in the future.

Economic Issues

1. How can schools effectively deal with inflation and the increased competition for resources?
2. How can schools effectively teach financial literacy?
3. How can schools obtain their fair share of education dollars?
4. How can schools increase productivity of their employees?
5. Can the schools prevent erosion of economic support by defeating voucher initiations and tax credit legislation?
6. Can education continue to be the bridge between the hard core, difficult-to-educate youth and the mainstream of American economic life?

7. What can be done to help the economic situation of Hispanics?
8. Can excellence be established in education during the period of declining financial support?

Public Confidence Issues

1. Can the schools intensify public confidence in education through appropriate adaptation to the needs of people in the future?
2. Can schools market their services to new clients?
3. Can schools respond to the needs of older people and to those who select several career changes?
4. How can we improve the quality of service given by school employees?
5. Can we decrease the number of strikes and conflicts that are now occurring in education?
6. Can we improve discipline in the public schools?
7. What can we do to balance financial and employment security of employees with the need for creative change and more efficient use of resources?
8. How can we get out the message that schools have been effective and that many innovations have been successful?
9. How can schools respond effectively to the public's desire for education in morality and effective citizenship?
10. Can we find ways to effectively improve the teaching/learning of basic literacy and mathematics skills?
11. Can schools become centers for demanding intellectual work?

Governance Issues

1. How can local boards of education regain control and direction of American public schools?
2. What can parents do to become involved in the governance of schools?
3. Can the general public purposes of education be re-affirmed by local boards of education?
4. Can the power of unions be effectively controlled by parent activism?
5. Have the traditional decision-making processes become too remote from large segments of our population?
6. Do we need to establish types of policies to be developed at each level of government?

7. Can a balance in governance be established between centralization and decentralization?

Social Stability Issues

1. Can we prevent massive social conflict during a period of high unemployment?
2. Will inflation create greater inequalities, polarization, conflict, and social disintegration? If so, what part do schools need to play in order to minimize social upheaval?
3. Can our schools continue to be the basis for social and economic equity for the poor of our nation?
4. How can educators find a balance between a liberal education and education for work?
5. What can be done to prevent urban schools from becoming predominantly schools for the poor and for minorities?
6. Can we re-establish loyalty to public schools and to the authority of education?
7. Can or should the schools be involved in social conflicts and social problems?
8. What can schools expect from other social agencies?

Administrator skills for the future. In the future educational leaders will need skills related to four areas:

1. The ability to forcefully and effectively articulate the historical mission of schools and their contributions to our nation.
2. The ability to effectively deal with social conflict and the demands of a pluralistic society.
3. The ability to promote social justice and equal educational opportunities for all students.
4. The ability to learn from all forms of leadership and to change leadership style as needed.

The future will be a time to re-establish basic faith in American public education. The nation will once again express its commitment to the "common schools." School leaders will need to be in the forefront of those who will articulate the efficacy of free public schools. It will require that school leaders articulate forcefully the historical contributions of public education to the economics of our nation. Schools have been the backbone of our society and the poetry and soul of our people. They have served our nation well and the people must be told about their achievements and their contributions.

Educational leaders in the future will no longer accept the criticism leveled at public schools by shipbuilders, by newspaper columnists, and by college-circuit speakers. The future will be a time to restore confidence in public schools and to articulate forcefully the part that schools have played in making the American Dream a reality for millions of boys and girls. School leaders in the future will need to defend the tower--a free system of public education for all the children of all the people.

First and foremost, educational leadership will require a missionary zeal to support public schools and to defend them from irresponsible critics. Public schools have been and will continue to be a basis for political freedom and economic sufficiency. They are the protectors of personal liberties. They are the vehicle for effective citizenship. The administrators of the future will not let anyone forget the greatness of public education and the contributions they have made to our nation.

Secondly, leadership in the future will require skills to deal with social conflict and the ambivalent and conflicting demands of a pluralistic society. Educational leaders will need to develop the ability to manage conflict, to adjudicate differences, to identify needs, and to communicate effectively with critics of education. Leaders will need to develop conflict mediation skills--the ability to work with groups of various interests and to establish reality in what is done.

In addition, school leaders will need to be sensitive to the frustrations which people bring to the school setting and separate that from the educational problems to be solved. The future will continue to be times of inflation, social problems, economic difficulties, and disillusion with life itself. School leaders must have the ability to work with individuals who are wholistically confused and who cannot separate the various forces that affect them. It will require a new set of skills: active listening, need identification, reality testing, problem articulation, conflict adjudication, and solution articulation. Such skills will make it possible for school leaders to continue to build support for public education.

Next, school leaders will need to articulate and support the moral positions of society. The future will be a period in which progress will be made to improve the economic position of the poor. Herman Kahn calls it the "great transition," a quantum leap into economic well-being by more and more members of our society. Schools will make a major contribution to that movement, as education has always been and will continue to be the bridge between poverty and affluence. The school leader must articulate the moral need to provide equitable education for the poor, the handicapped, the alienation. It will be the moral leadership of school leaders that will give reality to the dreams of our citizens.

It may have begun with Vietnam or with moral crises in Washington, D.C.; but the cry for truth, for justice, for fairness, for morality will continue to grow louder in the future. The school leader will need to have a keen understanding of ethics and demonstrate ethical character in leadership. Educational organizations cannot be effective without strong moral leadership. Any leadership which demonstrates moral conception destroys the organization it is attempting to lead. School leaders must live by a code of ethics and make moral confrontations to establish moral behavior as the norm of schools. Moral behavior will be more important than any time in the history of our nation.

School leaders must work for educational equity, must aim for justice in the treatment of employees and parents, must establish appropriate adjudication processes, and must protect the rights of teachers, students, and parents. Doing so will be difficult. It must, however, become a high priority for school leaders. Schools must become the exemplars of social justice, of fairness, of collaboration, of excellence in human service.

School administrators must once again regain the missionary zeal of the early leaders. We must once more see the visions of Horace Mann and Booker T. Washington. We must again "be afraid to die until we have won some victory for mankind." It is and will continue to be our purpose to find the Celestial City--equal education for all our students. It is our purpose to establish equity and justice in all of our schools.

Finally, school leaders must become the generalists of the educational arena. They will learn from all forms of leadership and practice various leadership styles. They must be able to adjust to changing conditions and to fluctuations in expectations. They will be sensitive to unique events which bring changes to the school arena. They will appreciate and understand that school expectations change with changing social events. They will remember sputnik, the energy crisis, the unionization of teachers, parent activism, the wild demands of the 1960's, and the conservatism of the early 1980's.

History tells us that the educational pendulum swings from liberalism to conservatism. The school leader cannot always control that swing, but the leader can understand what is happening and adjust to the demands of change. The leader will utilize a repertoire of strategies and skills to keep schools out of social controversy and to establish education as a national priority. He will be effective in keeping public support for education at a high level. It is the school leader's responsibility to protect the schools, to value education, to provide effective leadership without being

destroyed or misled by the shifting winds of public opinion and the changing demands of social events. And the leader will keep strong in the teeth of the gale. Regardless of what is happening in the general society, the mission of schools, education for all, will not be deterred or misdirected.

The schools of this nation have served us well. Millions are the benefactors of free public education. There is no reason to believe that schools will not continue to be effective in the future. Success is insured, because we have the men and women who will continue to occupy positions of educational leadership who understand and support the American dream. Such leaders are in our schools today and will continue to be in our schools in the future.